



BEHAVIOR HAS MEANING PRESENTER NOTES

This guide walks you through presenting the *Behavior Has Meaning* in-service suite. This in-service suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials. The main PowerPoint presentation and optional slides are for all professional audiences (teachers, home visitors, family child care providers). Separate PowerPoint Slides were developed for you to use with home visitors. Learning activities, tip sheets, and activity sheets are appropriately labeled for their intended audience.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Projector
- Audio equipment
- Flip chart or similar large paper
- Markers

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- This presentation provides participants with information about the importance of understanding that all behavior has meaning.
- Encourage participants to think about how this presentation pertains to the behaviors that the infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in their settings use to communicate their wants and needs, intentions and emotions, and how adults respond to these communicative attempts.
- The presentation includes video clips of children's behavior. Participants are encouraged to understand why the behaviors are important. Although the majority of the videos are teacher examples, home visitors can watch the strategies and use them for their own professional development and to encourage parents to replicate.
- Adaptation boxes are labeled throughout the presentation to individualize this training for your specific group.

LIST OF AVAILABLE CONTENT:

Handouts

- Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains
- Tips for Education Staff: Form and Function
- Tips for Home Visitors: Form and Function
- Tips for Families: Form and Function
- Learning Activity for Education Staff: Form and Function
- Learning Activity for Home Visitors: Form and Function
- Tips for Education Staff: Pause, Ask, Respond
- Tips for Home Visitors: Pause, Ask, Respond
- Tips for Families: Pause, Ask, Respond
- Helpful Resources
- Tools for Supervisors: Reflection and Feedback
- Tools for Supervisors: Observation Reflection
- Tools for Home-Based Supervisors: Observation Reflection

Optional handouts

- Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Children's Behaviors

Optional slides

- Optional Slide 1: Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Children's Behaviors
- Optional Slide 2: Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Children's Behaviors
- Optional Slide 3: Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Children's Behaviors
- Optional Slide 4: Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Children's Behaviors

Optional slides for Home-Based Care (Home Visitors) ONLY

- HV Optional Slide 1: Home-Based Title Slide
- HV Optional Slide 2: HSPPS Support Children's Behaviors
- HV Optional Slide 3: Center-Based and Family Child Care Practices
- HV Optional Slide 4: Home Visitor Practices
- HV Optional Slide 5: What's Different for a Home Visitor?
- HV Optional Slide 6: Theory of Change for Home-Based
- HV Optional Slide 7: Learning Activity: Form and Function
- HV Optional Slide 8: Behavior Has Meaning Scenario
- HV Optional Slide 9: Behavior Has Meaning Scenario continued
- HV Optional Slide 10: Behavior Has Meaning Video Example

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

SLIDE	HANDOUTS NEEDED	HOME VISITOR POWERPOINT ADAPTATION	HOME VISITOR HANDOUTS	OPTIONAL SLIDES	OPTIONAL HANDOUTS
1. Behavior Has Meaning Introduction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace with HV Optional Slide 1 if all participants are home visitors 			
2. Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains					
3. Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (see optional slides column) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional Slide 1-4 HV Optional Slide 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSPPS Support Children's Behaviors
4. House Framework for Effective Teaching Practice					
5. House Framework for Effective Teaching Practice: Foundation					
6. House Framework for Effective Teaching Practice: Center					
7. Objectives		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insert HV Optional Slides 3-6 after Objectives 			
8. Behavior					
9. You Can't Not Communicate					
10. "I'm trying to tell you something!"					
11. Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and Function (ES) Form and Function (F) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and Function (HV) Form and Function (F) 		
12. Forms of Communication					
13. Functions of Communication					
14. Form and Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Activity for Education Staff: Form and Function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace current slide with HV Optional Slide 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Activity for Home Visitors: Form and Function 		
15. Form and Function					

SLIDE	HANDOUTS NEEDED	HOME VISITOR POWERPOINT ADAPTATION	HOME VISITOR HANDOUTS	OPTIONAL SLIDES	OPTIONAL HANDOUTS
16. Behavior Has Meaning					
17. Behavior Has Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pause, Ask, Respond (ES) ▪ Pause, Ask, Respond (F) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pause, Ask, Respond (HV) ▪ Pause, Ask, Respond (F) 		
18. Behavior Has Meaning: Scenario		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace current slide with HV Optional Slide 8 			
19. Behavior Has Meaning: Scenario		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace current slide with HV Optional Slide 9 			
20. Behavior Has Meaning: Video Example 1					
21. Behavior Has Meaning: Video Example 2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace current slide with HV Optional Slide 10 			
22. Children Who Are Dual Language Learners					
23. Children Who Are Dual Language Learners					
24. Be a "Behavior Has Meaning" Detective					
25. Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helpful Resources ▪ Tools for Supervisors: Reflection and Feedback ▪ Tools for Supervisors: Observation Reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tools for Home-Based Supervisors: Observation Reflection 			

ES: Indicates Tips/Activity for Education Staff

HV: Indicates Tips/Activity for Home Visitors

F: Indicates Tips/Activity for Families



SLIDE 1

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves. For example, have participants find someone they don't know and introduce themselves to each other.


Icebreaker:

- After a few minutes, ask participants to take turns expressing an emotion they feel about being at the training today. They will have 30 seconds to demonstrate the emotion *without using words*. Time 30 seconds and then ask participants to switch roles.
- Ask participants if they were able to communicate without using words. Could their partner tell what they were communicating by observing their behavior?
- Share that this is what we will be focusing on—behavior has meaning.


ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Replace the current slide with HV Optional Slide 1

Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains



		CENTRAL DOMAINS				
		APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development	
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication Literacy	Mathematics Development Scientific Reasoning	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development	



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SLIDE 2

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) provides language to help teachers, family child care providers, and home visitors understand child development and what children should know and be able to do. The ELOF guides the implementation of effective program and teaching practices that promote strong outcomes for all children, including children with disabilities or suspected delays and children who are dual language learners or children who are learning a tribal language.

Children's behaviors tie to multiple ELOF domains, including Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, and Language and Communication. Children are born ready to interact with the social world around them. Adults are there to interpret behaviors and help children learn to communicate.

Children's Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains



- Approaches to Learning
 - Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation (Infant/Toddler & Preschool)
- Social and Emotional Development
 - Relationships with Adults (Infant/Toddler)
 - Emotional Functioning (Preschool)
- Language and Communication
 - Attending and Understanding (Infant/Toddler)
 - Vocabulary (Preschool)

SLIDE 3

FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- Children's ability to manage their feelings, emotions, actions, and behaviors are primarily listed in the Approaches to Learning domain under sub-domain Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation.
- During the infant and toddler years, children learn to use adults to meet their needs. When adults take the time to carefully observe children's behaviors and figure out their meanings, it's easier to meet children's needs. Seeking out adults to help meet their needs is a goal in the Social and Emotional Development domain under the sub-domain Relationships with Adults.
- Children learn to use different forms of communication to show that they need something—this includes using verbal (crying, cooing, one to three-word sentences) and non-verbal communication (hand signs, smiling). These goals are in the Language and Communication domain under the sub-domain Attending and Understanding.

FOR PRESCHOOLERS

- In the preschool years, children are better able to manage their emotions. They can appropriately express emotions, use adults as a guide for intense emotions, and find coping strategies that work. This is found in the Approaches to Learning domain under the sub-domain Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation and in the Social and Emotional Development domain under sub-domain Emotional Functioning.
- Preschoolers learn to express themselves with more detail and clarity. Goals regarding using new words to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings can be found in the Language and Communication domain under the sub-domain Vocabulary.

FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- If adults do not speak the children's home languages, the children may rely on behavior to express their thinking and feeling. If education staff do speak the child's home language, they can support children as they use language. It is also important to communicate with families to understand expectations for behavior at home and how their child expresses thoughts and feelings. Children benefit when families and education staff are on the same page regarding expectations for behaviors and share the same goals for children's development.

Note: This suite discusses children's behaviors in the context of what is developmentally appropriate. However, if there are questions about a child's behavior, it is important to talk with families about seeking referral for further evaluation. Here are some resources about detecting warning signs for behaviors.

RESOURCES:

Strategies for Understanding and Managing Challenging Behavior in Young Children: What is Developmentally Appropriate—and What is a Concern?

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ehs-ta-10.pdf>

Screening for Social Emotional Concerns: Considerations in the Selection of Instruments

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/roadmap-1.pdf>

Challenging Behavior: Support Plan for Children with Disabilities

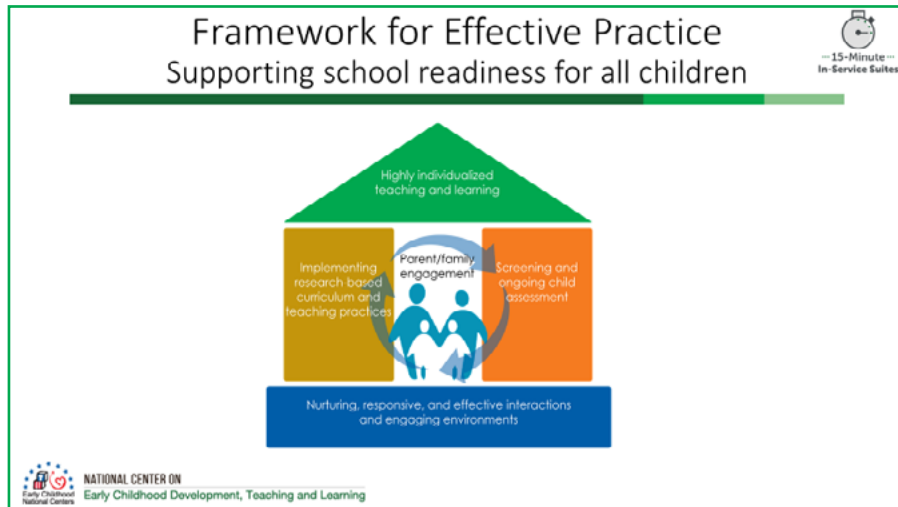
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/challenging-behavior-support-plans-children-disabilities>

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Children’s Behaviors Stretch Across the ELOF Domains

FOR HS/EHS:

- Insert Optional Slides 1-4
- Insert HV Optional Slide 2
- Handout: Head Start Program Performance Standards Support Children’s Behaviors

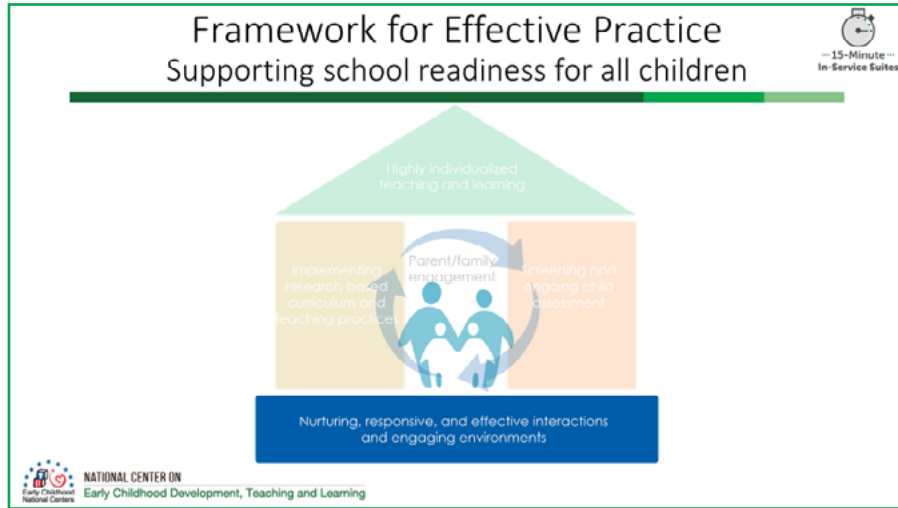


SLIDE 4

The framework for effective teaching practice is known as the House. The House represents five integral components of quality teaching and learning.

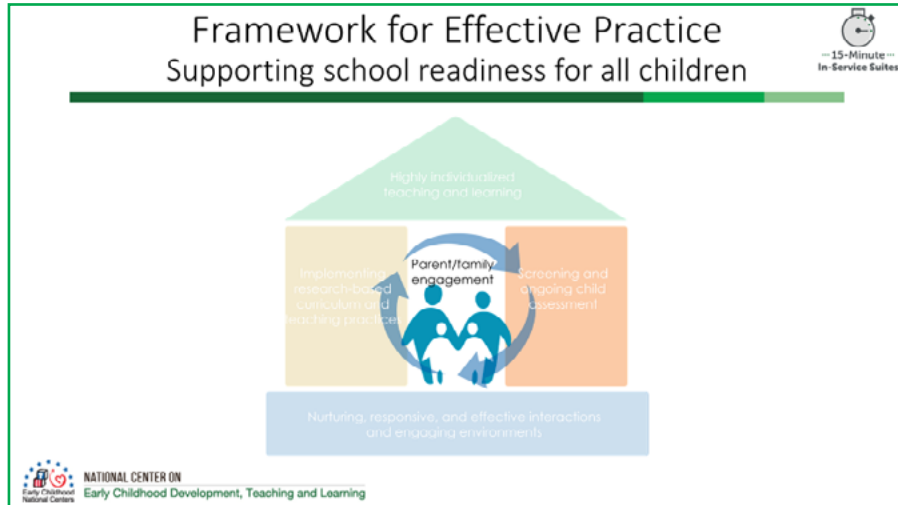
- The foundation: Providing nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions and engaging environments for children
- The first pillar: Choosing and implementing research-based curriculum and teaching practices
- The second pillar: Using screening and ongoing assessment of children's skills
- The roof: Individualizing teaching and learning
- The center: Engaging parents and families

When connected with one another, they form a single structure—the House Framework—that surrounds the family in the center. As we implement each component of the house—in partnership with parents and families—we foster children's learning and development.



SLIDE 5

This 15-minute in-service suite helps us think about the foundation of the House. We explore how nurturing, responsive, and effective interactions help us understand the meaning behind children's behaviors.



SLIDE 6

This suite also addresses the need to promote parent and family engagement. Engagement helps parents understand how to respond to their children’s behavior. Giving children the opportunity to express themselves is one way to engage parents and families in children’s learning both in the home and in the learning environment.

It is also important to learn families’ cultural expectations for children’s behavior and verbal expression. Talk with parents about the importance of understanding children’s behaviors.

Objectives



- Explain the importance of children’s behavior as communication
- Analyze and interpret the meaning of children’s behaviors
- Cover strategies that address children’s behaviors and build a supportive learning environment

SLIDE 7

Review objectives for the Behavior Has Meaning suite.


By the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of children’s behaviors as a means of communication
- Analyze and interpret the possible meaning of a variety of children’s behaviors
- Apply strategies that address children’s behaviors and build a supportive learning environment

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:


- Insert HV Optional Slides 3–6 to provide a foundation on Home Visiting Practices

Behavior



- What is the behavior?

- What do you believe about young children and their behavior?



SLIDE 8

Note to presenter: Have tables consist of staff in like roles or have groups think about varying ages.

Ask participants to talk at their tables and discuss how they would answer the following questions:

- What is the behavior?
- What do you believe about young children and their behavior?

Ask groups to share back with the larger group.

Ask participants if these questions were hard to answer. Easy? Why?

The main point here is that it is hard to define behavior. Behavior can look different across children and adults. And how we interpret and react to behavior is personal. We usually interpret behavior through the lens of our families, values, cultures, beliefs, experiences, and expectations.

You Can't Not Communicate



- All behavior is a form of communication and has meaning
- Children give us cues to help us understand what they want to communicate long before they have words

SLIDE 9

An important way to think about behavior is as a form of communication. Young children let us know their wants and needs through their behavior long before they have words. They give us cues to help us understand what they are trying to communicate.

Education staff and parents can help infants, toddlers, and preschoolers by interpreting their cues and responding to meet their needs.

The following example illustrates the importance of responding to the possible meaning behind behavior:

Javon bites Blair because he wants the block she is playing with and we remove Javon from the situation. Not only are we not responding to his want or need, but we are taking him out of the context where he can learn to communicate his feelings in a way that doesn't hurt others.

As we respond to children's communication, they begin to feel competent and confident, which encourages them to continue to develop and refine their skills.

“I’m trying to tell you something!”



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SLIDE 10

We are going to look at pictures of an infant, a toddler, and a preschooler. Think about what the child’s behavior may communicate. Chart responses on flip chart.

Note: Bring each picture up one at a time, discuss and record responses before going to the next picture.

Here are some possible responses:

Infant: “I’m tired.” “I’m hungry.” “I’m wet.” “I don’t know how to settle myself.” “I’m in pain.” “I want someone to hold me.”

Toddler: “I want you to hold me.” “Shana took my toy away.” “You just told me no and I don’t like that.” “I want to go outside right now.” “I’m tired.” “I’m crying because I don’t really know what I am feeling.” “I want to play by myself right now.”

Preschooler: “I don’t want to stop playing with the blocks to read a book.” “I am so mad.” “I am so frustrated.” “This task is too hard.” “Pay attention to me.” “It is past lunch time and I am tired and hungry.”

There are many reasons a child might use specific behaviors. This is why it is important for adults to carefully observe children, pay attention to their cues, get to know them, and know what part of the schedule gives them a hard time to better understand what they are trying to tell us through their behavior.


RESOURCES

Biting: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/biting-fact-sheet-families>

Discovering Feelings: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/my-1st-year-discovering-feelings-books>


Mental Health Tips for Families: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/mental-health-health-tips-families>

Behavior



Every communicative behavior can be described by its form and function.

- **Form vs. Function**
 - **Form:** the behavior used to communicate
 - What is the behavior?
 - **Function:** the reason behind the communicative behavior
 - What is the **purpose** of the behavior from the child's perspective?



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SLIDE 11

Every communicative behavior can be described by its form and function.

Form vs. Function

Form: The behavior

Function: The possible purpose of the communicative behavior. What is the child trying to communicate? What is the meaning of the behavior? When did it occur?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Tips for Education Staff: Form and Function
- Handout: Tips for Families: Form and Function

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Handout: Tips for Home Visitors: Form and Function
- Handout: Tips for Families: Form and Function

Forms of Communication

—15-Minute—
In-Service Suites

- Crying
- Cooing
- Reaching for caregiver
- Kicking their legs
- Gaze aversion (looking away)
- Squealing
- Biting
- Tantrums
- Pointing
- Smiling
- Pulling adult
- Clapping
- Words
- Jumping



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SLIDE 12

Here are some of the many ways young children communicate (FORM) their wants and needs. Think about what this might look like for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Functions of Communication



- Obtain an object, activity, person
- Request help
- Initiate social interaction
- Request information
- Seek sensory stimulation
- Escape demands
- Escape activity
- Avoid a person
- Escape sensory stimulation
- Express emotion
- Express pain or illness



SLIDE 13

We just looked at examples of the ways children communicate. Now let's look at a few of the possible messages (FUNCTION) that young children try to communicate to us.

Form and function are also shaped by culture. Children are socialized to express their feelings in culturally acceptable ways. It is important to talk with families so you can look for acceptable ways that children express themselves in a culturally respectful way.



SLIDE 14

Note to presenter: Have participants look at the images on their handouts for better viewing.

These pictures show Victoria (an older toddler) and her father at drop-off and breakfast time. What might Victoria be saying to her father? Make sure to keep form and function in mind. The speech bubbles will pop up one at a time.

Victoria comes to teacher Josena's classroom after her peers have arrived and have started eating breakfast. There is a film crew with three people in the classroom today, and they have one video camera and a digital camera focused on the children at the breakfast table. Victoria clings to her father, turning her head to his shoulder, and pulling his face close to her. Ms. Josena attempts to distract Victoria and redirect her to breakfast and her peers. Victoria does not let go of her father. Ms. Josena asks Victoria's father if he knows what might be upsetting her. He explains that she is often uneasy when there are adults around that she doesn't know. It takes her a little longer to warm up and feel secure.

Does this information change any of their speech bubbles? What was the form (behavior) and function (purpose) of Victoria's behavior?

Form—pouting, talking to her father, pointing, clinging

Possible Function—Please don't leave yet! I don't feel comfortable with all these new people in my classroom.

While Victoria might have had different reasons for wanting Dad to stay—it seems that wanting him to stay was the reason for her clinging behavior. She might have wanted Dad to stay because she was scared with the unfamiliar filming crew in her room. Additional information can help us better interpret the form and function of Victoria's behavior.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Learning Activity for Education Staff: Form and Function

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Replace the current slide with HV Optional Slide 7
- Handout: Learning Activity for Home Visitors: Form and Function

Form and Function



- A single form of behavior may serve multiple functions
- Multiple forms of behavior may serve a single function



SLIDE 15

As you have probably already experienced—it is not always easy to figure out the meaning of a child’s behavior. To add to the complexity of understanding the meaning of behavior:

- A single form of behavior may serve more than one function. For example, a toddler might use biting (form) for different functions (“I want the toy you have.” “I want to play with you but don’t know how to let you know.” “I’m tired.” “I’m frustrated because you don’t understand what I am trying to tell you.” “I want some attention.”)
- Several forms of behavior may serve one function. For example, a child’s purpose (function) may be to build with their favorite blocks, but they use different forms of behavior (biting, yelling, grabbing, running away with the blocks, sharing) based on how they feel that day, who is playing in the block area, or based on their cultural expectations.
- The meaning of behavior is shaped by culture, family, and the unique make up and experiences of the individual child. For example, some cultures may express sadness by crying or by having a nonchalant facial expression. Some cultures may express happiness by laughing and being exuberant, while others may expect more restrained behaviors.

Behavior Has Meaning



Why is it important to understand children's behaviors?

- Children feel valued and important
- Children feel like competent and confident communicators
- Children learn to communicate their intentions, feelings, and emotions

SLIDE 16

Understanding the possible meaning of children's behaviors helps build a supportive home and learning environment for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Interpreting children's behaviors influences our interactions, helps us build relationships with both children and families, and helps us intentionally plan or support families in their planning for routines and schedules to support children's needs and promote their learning.

When adults try to understand children's behaviors, it helps children:

- feel valued and important—they learn that adults will try to understand what they are communicating through their behavior;
- feel competent and confident as communicators; and
- learn to communicate their intentions, feelings, and emotions.

Behavior Has Meaning



Why is it important to understand children's behaviors?

- Adults build nurturing and responsive relationships with children
- Adults pause before they react
- Adults determine what skills we need to teach children

SLIDE 17

When adults try to understand children's behaviors it:

- Helps adults build nurturing and responsive relationships with children
- Helps adults pause to try to determine what the child's behavior might be communicating instead of reacting to the behavior
- Helps adults determine what skills we need to teach children to communicate

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Tips for Education Staff: Pause, Ask, Respond
- Handout: Tips for Families: Pause, Ask, Respond

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Handout: Tips for Home Visitors: Pause, Ask, Respond
- Handout: Tips for Families: Pause, Ask, Respond

Behavior Has Meaning: Scenario



Mom has left five-month-old Jenna in center care for the first time. It's been a rough two weeks so far for mom, baby, and the caregivers. When mom leaves, Jenna bursts into tears and screams. She only calms down when held by a teacher. Whenever they need to put her down, she immediately starts crying.

What might Jenna's behavior be telling us?

- What is the form?
- What might be the function?



SLIDE 18

[Slides 18-21 show examples to illustrate the importance of the points made in Slides 16-17.]

Have participants look at the information provided on the slide and then respond to the questions.

Mom has left five-month-old baby Jenna in center care for the first time. It's been a rough two weeks so far for mom, baby, and the caregivers. When mom leaves, Jenna bursts into tears and screams. She only calms down when a teacher holds her. Whenever they need to put her down, she immediately starts crying.

- What might Jenna's behavior be telling us?
 - What is the form?
Crying
 - What might be the possible function?

Jenna might really miss her mom. The noise of this new setting might be too much for her—home is quiet with soft lighting and no other baby sounds (like crying). Jenna might miss the feeling of security when mom is there and she can't quite get that safe feeling with these strangers yet.

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Replace the current slide with HV Optional Slide 8



Behavior Has Meaning: Scenario



- What can we do?
 - Observe Jenna's behaviors before she gets upset
 - Pause and reflect on what Jenna is trying to communicate
 - Communicate with Jenna's parents about strategies used at home to soothe her



SLIDE 19

Based on the form and our guess about the function—what could we do? What strategies did the caregivers use?

Point out that by pausing to try to better understand the meaning of Jenna's behavior and talking with Jenna's mom to get ideas and strategies used at home, the caregivers were able to

- be more responsive in meeting Jenna's wants and needs; and
- intentionally plan to help Jenna feel safe based on the type of interactions and environments she's used to at home (soothing her using words from her home language, providing more opportunities to hold her, considering the noise level/lighting in the room, etc.).


If we look at this example through Jenna's eyes, think of the difference in her experience based on caregivers understanding her behavior and matching their responses to meet her wants and needs.

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Replace the current slide with HV Optional Slide 9

Behavior Has Meaning: Video Example 1



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SLIDE 20

Watch Kevin and try to guess what he is trying to communicate through his behavior. Talk at your tables and then share with the larger group.

Our best guess is that Kevin is trying to get his teacher's attention. He even gives us cues because he looks right at his teacher (trying to get her attention) before he throws the plates. Almost as if he is saying "look at me!"

Why do you think this video is a good example of why it is important to understand that behavior has meaning? Does the way the teacher responded match Kevin's need for her attention? Did the teacher react to the behavior before trying to understand what it meant? What could she do to meet Kevin's needs based on what he was communicating? What could she teach Kevin to do the next time he wants to get her attention?

Behavior Has Meaning: Video Example 2



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SLIDE 21

This video is another example of the importance of behavior having meaning.

Watch the video and try to guess what the child in the red shirt is trying to communicate.

Discuss with the large group what you think the child is trying to communicate.

What might a teacher say if she looks up when she hears “stop doing that”? What might happen if adults don’t pause to try to determine the meaning of the behavior and just react to what they hear and see at that moment? Have adults worked previously with this child to help him learn to join in play with others? What could the child do differently next time? How can adults help him do that?

This is a great example of the importance of taking the time to understand a behavior’s meaning. If adults don’t take the time to pause, they might not notice that they need to plan opportunities to teach children how to join in play and provide opportunities for them to practice those skills. Adults often miss opportunities to help children develop school readiness skills when they don’t use information from children’s behaviors to meet their needs and wants. Even verbal communication carries an underlying meaning. It is important to pause and observe the entire interaction before determining the meaning and steps to take in response.

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Replace the current slide with HV Optional Slide 10

Children Who Are Dual Language Learners



During free play, Lucia wanders around the room. She stands and watches children play for a few minutes, but doesn't join in their play. Lucia doesn't stay at circle time longer than a few minutes and doesn't respond when asked to come back to circle time. What does her behavior mean? Is she acting this way because she doesn't understand what the expectations are during activities and in circle time? How do you know?



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SLIDE 22

Read and discuss the scenario on the slide.

Children Who Are Dual Language Learners



- Talk with families to learn common words used at home
- Have families visit the classroom to become familiar with the routines and expectations
- Build the children's strengths and interests into the curriculum
- Interact with the child during classroom routines to help them engage

SLIDE 23

What are some strategies that you have used with children who are dual language learners? What have you done to better understand the meaning of the child's behavior?

Here are some ideas.

- Talk with families to learn key words and find out how they think their child is doing in terms of behavior and expressing thoughts and ideas.
- For center-based and family child care, invite families to visit the program to learn the expectations and help determine what their child understands, the meaning of their behavior, and how to support the child's behavior. Provide interpreters if necessary.
 - Use this time to learn families' routines and expectations for children's behaviors. Together come up with ways to incorporate these ideas into the learning environment.
 - Invite parents to be part of the daily routines and learning activities. This could help families who are dual language learners engage in the program and learn to promote their children's learning. Education staff who do not speak the family's home language can also use this time to observe parent-child interactions and learn about behaviors and expectations that are typical for the family.
- Learn and observe the child's strengths and interests to integrate into curriculum planning.
- Make a picture board that goes across the daily schedule at home.
- Take time during daily routines and activities to carefully observe children's behaviors.
- Encourage peer interaction to promote language development and learning.

These strategies help us to better understand children, give meaning to their behaviors, match our responses to what children are communicating, and understand how we can better support and teach children new skills.

—15-Minute—
In-Service Suites

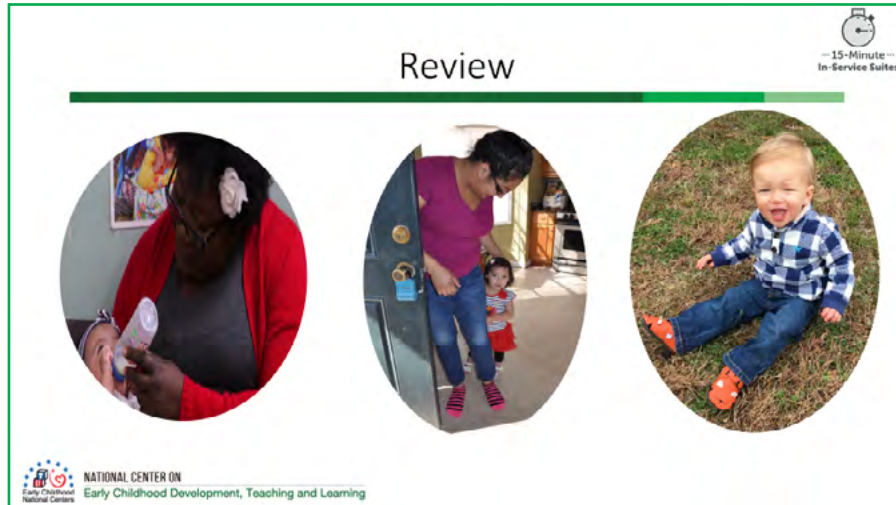
Be a “Behavior Has Meaning” Detective



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Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

SLIDE 24

We have discussed how important it is to truly believe that behavior has meaning. Pausing to try to figure out the meaning behind a child’s behavior—instead of just reacting to the behavior—can change the way we see a child, the way we respond to a child, and the way we teach a child. Become a “behavior has meaning” detective who is always on the lookout for the meaning of behavior.



SLIDE 25

- Behavior has meaning.
- Remember to pause and reflect instead of reacting. When we react, we tend to focus on our own experience (exhaustion, frustration, anger), rather than the child’s experience (frightened, lonely, trying to communicate).
- It takes time and effort to understand the intent of a child’s communication—but the payoff is worth it.
 - Children will feel valued and important. They will learn that we will try to understand what they communicate through their behavior.
 - Children will learn to communicate their intentions, feelings, and emotions in developmentally appropriate ways.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Handout: Helpful Resources
- Handout: Tools for Supervisors: Reflection and Feedback
- Handout: Tools for Supervisors: Observation Reflection

ADAPTATION FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Handout: Tools for Home-Based Supervisors: Observation Reflection